DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 180 527 JC 790 669

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TITLE Our Future--Who'll Be Out There Paying?
PUB DATE 17 May 79
NOTE 14p.: Paper presented at the National Conference for Community Services and Continuing Education (Dallas, TX, May 17, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Budgets; Community Colleges; Declining Enrollment; Education Vouchers; *Financial Problems; *Financial Support; *Junior Colleges; Residence Requirements; *Retrenchment; *State Legislation; Tax Support; Tuition
IDENTIFIERS *California (Los Angeles County); *Proposition 13 (California 1978)

ABSTRACT

For the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), the year after Proposition 13 was passed was one of almost constant reappraisal of priorities, of shifting programs and services to make the most of every available dollar, and of nearly constant uncertainty. Some of the effects of Proposition 13 were reductions in the numbers of part-time teachers, cuts in athletics and community services, reductions in the purchases of supplies and equipment, and a 9% reduction in the number of classes. Not surprisingly, enrollment also declined--by 3.7% from the previous year. The LACCD operated at a level of 81.9% of their pre-Proposition 13 budget and great uncertainty remains over next year's budget. Several proposals have arisen as issues in California, including: (1) the question of free flow enrollment, i.e., removing district boundaries so that students may enroll in any college they choose; (2) tuition; (3) shifting from the contract hour to the credit hour to measure workload changes; (4) a statewide voucher system; and (5) equalization of community college spending throughout the state. Each of these is laden with potential problems. Other issues of concern to the LACCD are the gasoline shortage, unemployment factors, and changing priorities on the part of the tax-paying public. (JG)

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Remarks by
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The National Conference for Community Services and Continuing Education
Dallas, Texas
May 17, 1979

OUR FUTURE -- WHO'LL BE OUT THERE PAYING?

THANK YOU, _____

_____

ALMOST ONE YEAR HAS PASSED SINCE CALIFORNIA'S INFAMOUS PROPOSITION 13 APPEARED ON THE SCENE AND PROMPTLY TURNED OUR STATE'S PUBLIC AGENCY FUNDING UPSIDE DOWN. THE PROPOSITION HAS ALSO CAUSED A GOOD DEAL OF ANXIETY ACROSS THE COUNTRY, SINCE IT SEEMS TO HAVE GENERATED A NUMBER OF SIMILAR INITIATIVES IN OTHER STATES. CALIFORNIA'S EXPERIENCE THEREFORE SEEMS WORTH EXAMINING IN LIGHT OF THE TOPIC THAT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED FOR MY PRESENTATION TODAY, "OUR FUTURE: WHO'LL BE OUT THERE PAYING?"

YES, WE'VE SURVIVED IN CALIFORNIA -- BUT THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN ONE OF NEARLY CONSTANT REAPPRAISAL OF PRIORITIES, OF SHIFTING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN ORDER TO MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY AVAILABLE PENNY, AND OF NEARLY CONSTANT UNCERTAINTY.

UNCERTAINTY, WITHOUT A DOUBT, HAS BEEN THE OPERATIVE TERM FOR THE PAST YEAR IN CALIFORNIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITY --

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AND THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT WILL BRING MANY CONCRETE ANSWERS.

WE'RE SEEING SOME LEGISLATION BEING PROPOSED IN OUR STATE CAPITOL DEALING WITH EVERYTHING FROM IMPOSITION OF STUDENT FEES TO ALTERING THE EXISTING FORMULA FOR STATE APPORTIONMENT BASED ON AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE -- I'LL TOUCH ON SOME OF THOSE PROPOSALS A LITTLE LATER -- BUT THE FACT REMAINS THAT MANY OF THESE BILLS STAND LITTLE OR NO CHANCE OF PASSAGE. WHAT WE ARE LEFT TO DO IN THE MEANTIME IS TO TRY TO DEVELOP THE MOST SENSIBLE METHODS OF DEALING WITH CONTINUED REVENUE SHORTFALLS -- AND TO ATTEMPT AS WELL TO REEXAMINE OUR OWN PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND MISSIONS IN LIGHT OF SHIFTING PUBLIC PRIORITIES.

BEFORE I LOOK INTO THE FUTURE, I'D LIKE TO TAKE JUST A MOMENT TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF PROPOSITION 13 FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF ONE YEAR DOWN THE ROAD.

THERE ARE SOME WHO WILL SAY THAT THE EFFECTS OF THE INITIATIVE WERE MINIMAL. I'D LIKE THOSE OBSERVERS TO MEET WITH THE MANY STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO HAVE SEEN VALUABLE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES CUT FROM OUR BUDGET. I'D LIKE THEM TO HEAR FIRST HAND ABOUT THE IMPACT OF REDUCTIONS IN THE NUMBERS OF PART-TIME TEACHERS, CUTS IN ATHLETICS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, REDUCTIONS IN PURCHASE OF SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT, AND EVEN SLASHES IN THE NUMBER OF CLASSES WE OFFER.

In the Los Angeles Community College District alone, a total of about 1,200 classes were cut from the fall '78 roster. This represented a nine percent reduction. A third of the cuts were in the Letters and Social Sciences. The rest were scattered in other study areas.

And, not surprisingly, enrollment also declined. We had a 3.7% decrease in our nine-campus district in fall '78 from the prior year.

Our district's rate of enrollment decline is below the statewide average of 10% but we've still been trying to combat this trend by vigorous and aggressive recruitment programs being conducted at the campus level and on a district-wide basis.

Also, since we didn't offer summer sessions last year as a money-saving measure, there is a possibility that some students who attended summer school in neighboring districts just decided to continue their studies at those institutions when fall rolled around.

Since we are scheduling summer school this year -- at about 70 to 80% of our 1977 class-offering level -- we will have a better idea next fall of just how much the lack of summer session hurt us,

THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR SAW THE LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OPERATING AT A LEVEL OF 81.9% OF OUR PRE-PROPOSITION 13 TARGET BUDGET. OF THAT AMOUNT 20% WAS FROM STATE APPORTICNMENT OR AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE, 40% WAS FROM THE STATE SURPLUS "BAIL-OUT", 20% WAS FROM LOCAL TAXES, AND 20% WAS FROM DISTRICT RESERVES WHICH ALL DISTRICTS STATEWIDE WERE REQUIRED TO RELINQUISH IF THEY WERE ABOVE A CERTAIN LEVEL.

GOVERNOR BROWN'S PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE 1979-80 FISCAL YEAR SHOWS SOME SHIFTS IN MONEY SOURCES. STATEWIDE, THE GOVERNOR IS PROPOSING THAT $567 MILLICN COME FROM THE STATE APPORTIONMENT. THIS REPRESENTS A $30 MILLION INCREASE OVER THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR. $260 MILLION WOULD COME FROM THE SURPLUS -- THE SAME AMOUNT AS THIS YEAR. AND, THE REMAINDER, $360 MILLION, WOULD COME FROM LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES. BUT THE TOTAL OF THOSE TAXES IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE IN ADVANCE.

IN FACT, DURING THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR, THE STATE INFORMED US JUST A SHORT TIME AGO THAT SINCE PROPERTY TAX REVENUE WAS RUNNING A BIT AHEAD OF EXPECTATIONS, OUR DISTRICT WOULD BE RECEIVING AN EXTRA $6.6 MILLION ABOVE WHAT WE HAD ANTICIPATED.

WE FUNNELED THESE FUNDS INTO HIGH PRIORITY AREAS SUCH AS PART-TIME TEACHERS, FACULTY SUBSTITUTES, AND SUMMER SCHOOL. AND,

EVEN THOUGH WE WERE DELIGHTED TO RECEIVE THE EXTRA FUNDS, THE ARRIVAL OF THE MONEY LATE IN THE FISCAL YEAR PLACED US IN AN UNUSUAL SITUATION.

WE DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER TO USE THE FUNDS TO MAKE UP FOR INEQUITIES CAUSED BY PROPOSITION 13, OR TO SAVE THEM IN CASE THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR TURNS OUT TO BE EVEN LEANER THAN THIS ONE. AND, IF WE SAVED THE MONEY FOR NEXT YEAR, WE WONDERED WHETHER HAVING THAT AMOUNT ON HAND WOULD RESULT IN RECEIVING LESS FROM THE STATE.

NONE OF THE FUNDING PROPOSALS WE'VE SEEN FOR FISCAL 1979-80 CALL FOR UTILIZATION OF EXISTING DISTRICT RESERVES IN THEIR FINANCIAL PLAN, THOUGH. BUT ONCE AGAIN, THE MAIN WORD STILL IS "UNCERTAINTY."

THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED STATEWIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BUDGET ALLOTMENT TOTALS $1.1 BILLION, WHICH IS ABOUT 4% MORE THAN THIS YEAR'S. WHEN YOU TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT INFLATION IS RUNNING AT FROM 8 TO 10% A YEAR, IT'S EASY TO SEE THAT WE'LL BE RUNNING MORE AND MORE BEHIND WITH EACH MONTH THAT PASSES UNDER THIS FUNDING ARRANGEMENT.

AS YOU UNDOUBTEDLY KNOW, THE STATE'S SUPREME COURT RULED THIS SPRING THAT THE GOVERNOR'S STIPULATION AGAINST EMPLOYEE COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES WAS UNCONSTITUTIONAL. WE HAD SET ASIDE FUNDS FOR THESE INCREASES, PENDING COURT ACTION. BUT OUR BUDGET

PLANS FOR THE NEXT YEAR HAVE TO INCLUDE MUCH-NEEDED SALARY INCREASES FOR EMPLOYEES --AND WE CAN'T HELP WONDERING WHERE THE MONEY WILL COME FROM.

THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF EDUCATIONAL ISSUES THAT HAVE ARISEN IN CALIFORNIA IN THE WAKE OF PROPOSITION 13 THAT I WOULD LIKE TO BRIEFLY OUTLINE. WHILE SOME MIGHT SEEM AT FIRST GLANCE TO BE SOMEWHAT REMOVED FROM THE BASIC ISSUE OF FINANCE, IT SEEMS THAT LEGISLATORS ARE TAKING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GENERATE VARIOUS PIECES OF LEGISLATION AFFECTING US -- AND TO TIE IT IN WITH VARIOUS FUNDING PROPOSALS. THIS IS JUST ONE MORE WAY IN WHICH STATE INFLUENCE IS BEING FELT WITH INCREASING INTENSITY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

ONE ISSUE ARISING DURING THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN THE QUESTION OF FREE-FLOW. AT LEAST ONE LEGISLATOR HAS ADVOCATED REMOVING ALL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES STATEWIDE IN ORDER THAT COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS MAY ENROLL IN WHICHEVER COLLEGE THEY CHOOSE THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

WE ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THIS CONCEPT AND FEEL IT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO WHITE FLIGHT FROM INNER CITY CAMPUSES, AND WOULD THEREFORE DESTROY THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION WE COULD AFFORD TO OFFER AT THE MAINLY MINORITY COLLEGES.

IF ENROLLMENT DECLINES AT A PARTICULAR COLLEGE BECAUSE THE MORE AFFLUENT CAN NOW GO ELSEWHERE IN THE STATE TO ATTEND COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSES, THEN HOW DO WE AFFORD TO MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION AT THE COLLEGE WITH SHRINKING ENROLLMENTS?

AND WOULDN'T THERE BE THE STRONG LIKELIHOOD THAT SPECIFIC CAMPUSES WOULD DEVELOP STRONG AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION, APPEALING TO VERY SPECIFIC GROUPS OF STUDENTS IN FIELDS SUCH AS NURSING OR FILM MAKING?

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE STUDENTS WHO HAVE COME TO RELY UPON THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO SUPPLY A WELL-ROUNDED, COMPLETE RANGE OF ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL OFFERINGS? WOULDN'T WE BE DEPRIVING THE VERY STUDENTS WHO NEED US MOST?

AND THEN THERE IS THE ISSUE OF TUITION. CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE THE LAST STRONGHOLD OF TUITION-FREE PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN THIS COUNTRY -- BUT THAT UNIQUE STATUS IS IN JEOPARDY. SEVERAL BILLS BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE CONTAIN STIPULATIONS FOR IMPOSITION OF "STUDENT FEES," WHICH HAVE THE SAME IMPACT AS TUITION NO MATTER WHAT NAME ONE ATTACHES.

ONE BILL IN PARTICULAR -- THE HOLMDAHL BILL -- SAYS THAT THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS WOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO REQUIRE ALL COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS TO PAY A STUDENT SERVICE FEE

COVERING SUCH NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES AS ADVISEMENT, FINANCIAL AID, ADMINISTRATION, HOUSING, AND REGISTRATION.

THAT FEE WOULD BE BASED ON A SLIDING SCALE FOR EACH STUDENT, BASED UPON THE NUMBER OF CREDIT UNITS OR WEEKLY STUDENT CONTACT HOURS FOR WHICH THE STUDENT IS ENROLLED.

FEES FOR NON-CREDIT CLASSES WOULD ALSO BE AUTHORIZED.

ACCORDING TO AN ANALYSIS OF THE BILL BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE, THIS COULD MEAN A CHARGE OF UP TO $150 FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS. OBVIOUSLY, THE STUDENTS WE SERVE WOULD BE EXTREMELY HARD HIT BY ANY SUCH CHARGES. MANY WOULD HAVE TO ABANDON THEIR AMBITIONS TO PURSUE A COLLEGE EDUCATION.

AND THE MONEY GENERATED WOULDN'T EVEN HAVE THAT GREAT AN IMPACT ON THE FUNDING PROBLEMS WE FACE. ACCORDING TO A LONG-RANGE FINANCE ANALYSIS PREPARED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS, A CHARGE OF $100 PER ADA WOULD ONLY SUPPORT 4% OF TOTAL COLLEGE BUDGETS.

THERE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSIONS THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA ON OTHER RESPONSES TO REDUCED REVENUES, INCLUDING SHIFTING FROM THE CONTACT HOUR TO THE CREDIT HOUR TO MEASURE WORKLOAD CHANGES.

AND A STATEWIDE VOUCHER SYSTEM FOR EDUCATION HAS ALSO BEEN RECEIVING SOME ATTENTION. EARLY PUBLIC OPINION POLLS SHOW

THAT MANY VOTERS IN THE STATE WOULD PROBABLY BE IN FAVOR OF IMPOSING SUCH A SYSTEM. OBVIOUSLY, THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION ARE EXTREMELY WIDE-RANGING.

THERE ARE ALSO LEGISLATIVE BILLS THAT SEEK TO EQUALIZE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SPENDING PER ADA THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE VASCONCELLOS BILL IN THE ASSEMBLY CALLS FOR AN EQUALIZATION MEASURE ON ADA. ANY DISTRICTS MORE THAN 25 PERCENT OVER THE STATE MEAN WOULD HAVE 25 PERCENT OF THEIR OVERAGE DEDUCTED FROM THEIR STATE ALLOTMENT EACH YEAR UNTIL THEY ARE BROUGHT DOWN TO THE MEAN. NO INFLATION FACTOR WOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. FOR THOSE AT THE MEAN, THE ONLY INCREASE WOULD BE BASED ON INFLATION RATES. FOR THOSE BELOW THE MEAN, THEY WOULD GRADUALLY BE BROUGHT UP TO THE MEAN FIGURE.

OF COURSE, THIS PLAN DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT HISTORIC COST DIFFERENCES WHICH RESULT FROM A COMBINATION OF FACTORS, INCLUDING SIZE, TYPE OF PROGRAMS OFFERED, AND SO ON.

THE PLAN ALSO DOES NOT ACCOUNT FOR THE FACT THAT MUCH OF THE COST DIFFERENCE AMONG PROGRAMS MAY BE DUE TO HOW LONG THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN OFFERED OR THE PREDOMINANT INSTRUCTIONAL MODE UTILIZED.

WE ARE ALL AWARE THAT, OTHER FACTORS BEING EQUAL, THE SAME PROGRAM IN A NEW COLLEGE CAN COST LESS THAN IN AN OLD ONE. AND A PROGRAM THAT REQUIRES HEAVY UTILIZATION OF LABS AND SHOPS WILL COST SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN ONE USING LECTURES OR INDEPENDENT STUDY.

DISCUSSION IS ALSO TAKING PLACE THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA HIGHER EDUCATION ON IMPLICATIONS OF WHAT IS KNOWN AS THE 50% LAW WHICH -- UNDER THE STATE EDUCATION CODE -- REQUIRES THAT 50% OF ALL FUNDS BE SPENT ON INSTRUCTION.

WE'VE NOTICED AN ARTIFICIAL DISTORTION OF RATIOS OF ADMINISTRATION TO FACULTY IN THOSE DISTRICTS THAT DID NOT HOLD SUMMER SESSION LAST YEAR.

COMMUNITY COLEGES STATEWIDE ARE ALSO LOOKING INTO VARIED RESPONSES TO FUNDING INSECURITIES, INCLUDING EXAMINING THE POSSIBILITY OF SOLICITING PRIVATE DONATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, AND SEEKING TO INVOLVE BUSINESS, INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES IN OUR LONG-RANGE PLANNING EFFORTS.

ADDITIONALLY, WE ARE SEEING EFFORTS TO MORE SPECIFICALLY DELINEATE FUNCTION WITHIN THE THREE SEGMENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SEEKING WAYS IN WHICH OUR RESOURCES MIGHT BE USED COOPERATIVELY IN ORDER TO BE MORE COST-EFFICIENT.

THESE MIGHT SEEM LIKE CONTRADICTORY GOALS, BUT IN LIGHT OF THE FUNDING UNCERTAINTIES WE FACE, WE MUST CONTINUE TO EXAMINE ALL POSSIBILITIES. IF WE CAN MORE EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE SOME OF OUR PHYSICAL PLANTS OR EXPENSIVE EQUIPMENT BY SUCH COOPERATION, THEN THIS OPTION MIGHT PROVE VERY ATTRACTIVE AS TIME GOES BY.

OF COURSE, ANOTHER FACTOR NOT RELATED TO PROPOSITION 13 COULD BE HAVING A PROFOUND EFFECT ON COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN CALIFORNIA -- AND POSSIBLY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THAT FACTOR IS THE GASOLINE SHORTAGE. YOU HAVE ALL HEARD, I'M SURE, ABOUT THE LONG LINES AT CALIFORNIA GAS PUMPS. LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT THOSE STORIES ARE NOT EXAGGERATIONS. THE IMPACT OF THIS PHENOMENON IS JUST BEGINNING TO BE MEASURED, BUT I BELIEVE THAT A PERIOD OF CRISIS -- SUCH AS THE GAS SHORTAGE -- HAS A RIPPLE EFFECT THAT CANNOT HELP BUT TOUCH EDUCATION.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT IS CURRENTLY CONDUCTING SURVEYS ON OUR CAMPUSES TO DETERMINE WHAT IMPACT THE GAS LINES ARE HAVING ON STUDENT ATTENDANCE, LATE ARRIVALS, EMPLOYEE ABSENCE, AND EVEN ON PARKING LOT SECURITY -- TO PROTECT AGAINST GAS SIPHONING.

WE ARE TRYING TO DETERMINE WHETHER EVENING CLASS ATTENDANCE IS SUFFERING MORE SIGNIFICANTLY THAN DAY CLASS RATES, SINCE THOSE STUDENTS ATTENDING AT NIGHT ARE PROBABLY WORKING DURING THE DAY AND USING THEIR LIMITED GASOLINE SUPPLIES TO GET TO AND FROM THE JOB.

WE ARE ALSO TRYING TO DETERMINE WHAT EFFECT THE SITUATION WILL HAVE ON SUMMER SESSION, WHICH WE HAVE CHANGED TO A FOUR-DAY SCHEDULE AS AN ENERGY-SAVING MEASURE. BUT WILL STUDENTS HAVE THE GASOLINE TO TRAVEL TO AND FROM CAMPUS? WE STILL DON'T KNOW.

AND THEN THERE ARE THE EMPLOYMENT FACTORS THAT WILL COME INTO PLAY. WE ARE ALREADY SEEING SOME BUSINESSES BEING HIT QUITE HARD BY DECREASED CUSTOMER TRAFFIC. LAYOFFS HAVE BEEN PREDICTED IN SOME SECTORS. COMMUNITY COLLEGES TRADITIONALLY EXPERIENCE ENROLLMENT INCREASES DURING PERIODS OF LOW EMPLOYMENT, BUT WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHETHER THIS TREND WILL HOLD TRUE IN A GAS CRUNCH. WE AREN'T SURE WHETHER THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN LAID OFF DUE TO DECREASED BUSINESS ACTIVITY WILL CHOOSE TO RETRAIN THEMSELVES FOR A NEW CAREER OR UPGRADE THEIR SKILLS AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE -- OR WHETHER THEY'LL DECIDE TO TRY TO RIDE OUT THE CRISIS, COLLECTING UNEMPLOYMENT CHECKS AND HOPING FOR THE SITUATION TO EASE.

I MENTION THIS PHENOMENON BECAUSE IT IS EXPECTED THAT ALL OF US WILL BE FACING A LONG, DRY SUMMER -- AT LEAST AS FAR AS FUEL IS CONCERNED -- AND THIS COULD HAVE DRAMATIC IMPACT ON ALL OF US. OF COURSE, LOS ANGELES IS LESS PREPARED IN TERMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION THAN MANY OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTRY, BUT THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS WILL AFFECT ALL OF US AS THE SITUATION ESCALATES.

WE ALSO HAVE TO BE PREPARED FOR RE-ORDERED PRIORITIES ON THE PART OF THE TAX-PAYING PUBLIC. EDUCATION WILL BE REGARDED AS LESS OF A PRIORITY THAN IT HAS BEEN DURING NON-CRISIS PERIODS. WE WILL HAVE TO ANTICIPATE THIS SITUATION AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT WE WILL BE DEALING WITH TAXPAYERS WHO ARE INCREASINGLY TIGHT-FISTED. AND ANGER AT WHAT IS PERCEIVED AS GOVERNMENT INEFFICIENCY COULD SPILL OVER ONTO OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES.

CICERO ONCE SAID, "LET US NOT GO OVER THE OLD GROUND; LET US RATHER PREPARE FOR WHAT IS TO COME." THERE IS A DANGER FOR THOSE OF US IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO LOOK TO THE PAST FOR ANSWERS TO THE CONDITIONS WE WILL BE FACING IN THE FUTURE. BUT I SUBMIT TO YOU THAT THE ANSWERS DO NOT LIE IN THE PAST. WE MIGHT WANT TO MAINTAIN ILLUSION OF THE STATUS QUO, BUT WE MUST REALIZE THAT IS NO LONGER AN OPTION.

TAXPAYERS ARE BEING SQUEEZED, AND THEY'RE ANGRY. THEY'RE FIGHTING GOVERNMENTAL SPENDING, AND THEY RESENT OUR TALES OF WOE. ELECTED OFFICIALS -- ALWAYS QUICK TO RESPOND TO SUCH GROUNDSWELLS OF PUBLIC MOOD -- ARE TIGHTENING FISCAL CONTROLS AND DEMANDING MORE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EVERY DOLLAR ALLOCATED. THE REAL FINANCIAL CRUNCH IS JUST BEGINNING.

I ONCE READ THAT IT IS IRONIC THAT THIS IS THE FIRST GENERATION THAT HAS PAID MUCH ATTENTION TO THE FUTURE -- SINCE WE MAY NOT HAVE ONE. I DISAGREE WITH THE PESSIMISM OF THAT STATEMENT, BUT I AM CERTAIN THAT OUR SURVIVAL IN THE YEARS TO COME IS GOING TO REQUIRE MORE FLEXIBILITY, MORE INGENUITY, AND MORE CREATIVITY THAN HAS EVERY BEEN REQUIRED OF US AS EDUCATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS. IT IS UP TO US TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE. I AM CONFIDENT THAT -- BY SHARING OUR IDEAS, OUR EXPERIENCES, AND OUR EXPERTISE -- WE WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO.

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